

Royal Mail Delivery Issue: Community Meeting 10th October 2026. Village Hall, Edington

Meeting Notes

 Started at 7:25 PM on 10 Oct 2026, lasted 1h 36m

Meeting title: Royal Mail Delivery Issues Community Meeting > 49 attendees + 5 admin supporters

Jayne Mogg: Meeting co-ordinator and lead Chair

Tessa Munt: Regional MP for the majority of the Polden Hills.

Key Points

- Meeting purpose: residents of Polden Hills gathered to document and escalate Royal Mail delivery failures affecting medical appointments, legal documents, and personal letters for up to a year.
- National survey data and resident reports confirmed widespread delays — one in three respondents received mail daily while 15% received it once a week or less, with some areas going over two weeks without any delivery. Meeting attendees felt strongly that the Polden area is encountering far worse delivery service than the cited national statistics.
- Specific delay examples cited: a weekend magazine delayed seven weeks in Cossington, a bundle of letters delivered once a week in North Petherton, and a parcel posted 26th August still undelivered by 23rd September. A Royal Mail Signed-For important business letter postmarked 26/8 delivered 23/9.
- Royal Mail's own national performance figures were challenged — only 75.7% of first-class mail delivered within one working day against regulatory targets, and no postcode area met the first-class target in 2025–26.
- Regulatory fines totalling £37.1 million since 2022 were highlighted (£5.6M in 2022–23, £10.5M in 2023–24, £21M in 2024–25), with a further Ofcom investigation opened June 2025 for continued delivery failures.
- Staffing shortages and poor staff management were identified as root causes — Ashley Fox MP noted staff levels were allowed to deteriorate without a proper recruitment strategy, rather than a sudden mass resignation.
- Royal Mail's new national alternate-day delivery model was explained: second-class mail delivered on alternating weekdays, resulting in only five second-class deliveries per two-week period per household.
- A £500 million five-year national investment commitment from Royal Mail was noted, equivalent to 3,000 new part-time posts annually, but attendees questioned the lack of publicly available evidence that conditions had actually improved.
- Guaranteed 24-hour delivery services were flagged as misleading — one attendee paid for guaranteed next-day delivery only for it to arrive five days late, with Royal Mail quietly reclassifying the service as "aspirational."

- NHS appointment letters and DVLA correspondence were highlighted as the most critical failure area, with concerns raised about Royal Mail's duty of care and patients being deregistered for missing appointments they never received.
- Sorting office access for members of the public to personally collect their mail was raised as a practical barrier — limited opening hours, no pavement, 30-minute parking maximum, and long queues of up to two hours made collecting held mail extremely difficult for residents and generally impossible for those with limited mobility.
- Fines paid by Royal Mail go to the Treasury rather than being reinvested in service improvement, prompting calls for a formal question to be raised in Parliament about where fine revenue is directed.
- A temporary workaround was discussed where NHS appointment letters might be copied to GPs, who could then contact patients by phone, reducing dependency on postal delivery for time-critical health correspondence.
- Residents were encouraged to document delivery failures with photos, videos, and written complaints, with Tessa Munt planning to visit the Bridgwater sorting office in December to observe incoming mail handling firsthand.
- Key asks identified for escalation: a public apology from Royal Mail, disclosure of current backlog and sickness data, compensation for fines and missed appointments caused by delivery failures, and measurable evidence of service improvement.
- Tessa Munt requested photographs/video's of Bridgwater Sorting Office public queueing and Royal Mail recruitment posters located inside Bridgwater Sorting Office
- Tessa's contact details were made available for meeting attendees. Should anyone wish to supply specific examples of Royal Mail service failures, they can use the following:
Tessa.munt.mp@parliament.uk NB: Its best to include your address and postcode
- ITV will be touring the Polden Hills on Thursday 15th October to interview residents. If anyone has a 'strong' or 'good' example of Royal Mail Service failure, then please reach out to the Royal Mail Saga Facebook group, who will attempt to connect you with the ITV team.

Outline

Meeting Purpose and Community Impact of Royal Mail Delivery Failures

- Arranged for residents of the Polden Hills area, the meeting was convened to give community members a platform to voice their frustration over months to nearly a year of severely disrupted postal deliveries.
- Missed medical appointments, delayed legal documents, undelivered registered and personal letters, and the prioritisation of parcels over letters were cited as the core issues affecting residents.
- Multiple communities beyond the immediate area were identified as affected, including Bridgwater and various surrounding villages, with the problem believed to extend nationally.

- A supportive tone toward postal workers was emphasised, with acknowledgement that many staff members likely feel distressed about the situation themselves.

Evidence of Prolonged Delivery Delays Across the Region

- Residents in Cossington reported receiving no deliveries for more than two weeks at a time.
- A weekend magazine was reportedly misdelivered or withheld for seven weeks in one documented case.
- North Petherton residents described receiving bundled letters approximately once a week rather than through regular daily deliveries.
- National survey data indicated that one in three respondents reported receiving mail every day, while 15% reported receiving it once a week or less, raising questions about data accuracy and consistency.
- A specific item posted on 26 August had still not been delivered by 23 September, illustrating the scale of the backlog.
- Residents with limited mobility were highlighted as particularly vulnerable, as they are unable to travel to the Bridgewater sorting office to collect their own mail.

Royal Mail Performance Statistics and Regulatory Failures

- National First-class delivery performance for 2025 to 2026 stood at only 75.7% of items delivered within one working day, against a regulatory target of one to three days.
- National Second-class delivery performance was similarly falling short of targets, with only 0.4% of daily delivery routes meeting the required standard.
- No National postcode area met the first-class delivery target in 2025 to 2026, and none of Royal Mail's 111 postal areas achieved the local target of 91.5%.
- Regulatory fines issued to Royal Mail totalled 5.6 million pounds for 2022 to 2023, rising to 10.5 million pounds for 2023 to 2024, and 21 million pounds for 2024 to 2025, bringing the cumulative total since 2022 to approximately 37.1 million pounds.
- A further regulatory investigation was opened on 1 June following another failure to meet expected delivery standards.
- Questions were raised about where the fine money goes, with speculation that it may be directed to the Treasury rather than reinvested into service improvement.

Staffing Shortages and Operational Mismanagement

- Royal Mail attributed the majority of delivery problems to acute staff shortages and short-term sickness among delivery personnel.
- The view was expressed that the issues stem from poor staff management rather than sudden resignations, with recruitment and retention allowed to deteriorate over time without a proper strategy.
- A resident shared that her husband, a man in his 50s who had recently been made redundant, applied for a delivery role at the Bridgewater office but was rejected without explanation and told to reapply in six months.

- A former postal worker described the introduction of a new route management system as having made conditions significantly worse, with delivery rounds becoming overloaded and unmanageable.
- Delivery vans were reported to be consistently overfilled with post, making it difficult to organise and complete rounds efficiently.
- The broader concern was raised that poor management culture, lack of recognition, and inadequate support for staff are contributing to ongoing workforce instability.

Impact on Vulnerable Residents and Critical Correspondence

- Elderly residents and those with limited mobility were identified as disproportionately affected, given their reliance on postal correspondence for medical appointments, benefit letters, and banking communications.
- A resident described a neighbour whose stepfather has diabetes and relies entirely on postal correspondence to manage his healthcare, illustrating the life-critical nature of reliable mail delivery.
- NHS appointment letters not arriving were highlighted as a serious failure of duty of care, with patients missing appointments, being deregistered from specialist services, and having to restart lengthy referral processes.
- Delayed DVLA and insurance correspondence was also cited as causing residents to incur fines and legal complications through no fault of their own.
- A birthday card posted at the beginning of August was not received until the end of September, and when it did arrive, a surcharge demand was included, demonstrating the compounding frustration caused by delays.

Royal Mail's New National Delivery Model and Its Shortcomings

- Royal Mail introduced a new alternating delivery model under which each address receives deliveries on alternating weekdays, with second-class mail delivered five times every two weeks rather than daily.
- Under the model, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday deliveries include all parcels and letters of both classes, while Tuesday and Thursday deliveries include only parcels and first-class letters.
- Concerns were raised about the practical implementation of this model, particularly how sorting offices are expected to physically separate first and second-class mail into individual pigeon holes for each address.
- The model was described as fundamentally flawed because parcels are still being delivered next day to the same addresses where letters are delayed for weeks, demonstrating that the infrastructure exists but is not being applied equitably.
- Businesses paying thousands of pounds for regular bulk mail distribution, such as monthly home magazines delivered to every household, reported that their mailings had stopped arriving entirely.

Royal Mail's Stated Commitments and Lack of Measurable Progress

- Royal Mail publicly committed to a 500 million pound investment over five years to improve quality and reliability, including resources equivalent to 3,000 part-time posts per year and opportunities for 6,000 existing part-time staff to increase their hours.
- Daily monitoring and public reporting were announced as measures being introduced alongside the new delivery model across approximately 1,000 delivery offices.
- No publicly available evidence was found to demonstrate that the problems experienced by residents in Bridgwater and surrounding areas had actually improved as a result of these commitments.
- Recruitment advertising was observed (located within the Sorting Office), but no data was available on how many staff had actually been hired or how many delivery routes remained uncovered.
- Two and a half thousand redundancies were announced at Royal Mail's head office, raising questions about where investment money was actually being directed within the organisation.

Political and Parliamentary Engagement on the Issue

- Ashley Fox MP, unable to attend due to parliamentary commitments, submitted a written statement confirming he had met with the regional director in September and had been in repeated communication with Royal Mail since then.
- His assessment was that the problems are rooted in staff mismanagement rather than sudden shortages, and he stated his belief that staffing levels had been allowed to deteriorate without a proper recruitment strategy.
- Over 200 complaints received from constituents had been forwarded to Royal Mail, and a resident survey was being conducted and deliberately distributed by post to track delivery performance.
- Tessa Munt (the local MP for the majority of the Polden Hills) attended and confirmed that her office held a meeting with Royal Mail on 19 August during which she received a written explanation of the new National alternating delivery model... but had not subsequently received any responses to her multiple emails.
- Government ministers had described the wider performance of Royal Mail's network as unacceptable, signalling concern at a national level beyond individual constituency complaints.
- The question of whether regulatory fines represent a breach of contract was raised, with the intention to pursue this through parliamentary questions.

Guaranteed Delivery Service Failures and Consumer Rights

- A resident paid for a guaranteed 24-hour delivery service, only for the item to arrive five days later with no prior notification of the delay.

- Royal Mail's terms were found to have been quietly changed from guaranteed delivery to aspirational delivery, removing the contractual obligation without informing customers.
- The view was expressed that selling a guaranteed service while knowing it cannot be fulfilled constitutes a form of consumer fraud, and that customers should be given accurate information to make informed choices.
- Compensation for failed guaranteed services was raised as an area requiring formal action, given that customers are paying a premium for a standard that is not being met.

Next Steps

- Plans were discussed to formally request from Royal Mail current data on delivery backlogs, staffing levels, sickness rates, and customer complaint volumes.
- A public apology from Royal Mail was identified as a priority demand, alongside a formal statement acknowledging the scale of the service failure.
- The possibility of Tessa Munt visiting the Bridgwater sorting office to observe incoming mail handling was discussed as a way to better understand where delays originate.
- Exploring whether NHS and DVLA appointment letters could be routed through GP surgeries or digital platforms as a temporary measure was suggested to protect vulnerable patients.
- Investigating the legal basis for holding Royal Mail accountable for breach of contract, particularly in relation to fines and guaranteed service failures, was identified as a course of action to pursue.
- Gathering photographic and video evidence of queues and conditions at the Bridgwater sorting office was suggested as supporting material for ongoing complaints and escalations.
- Continuing to collect resident experiences through the Royal Mail Saga Facebook group and future meetings was agreed upon as a means of building a consolidated evidence base for further engagement with Royal Mail and parliamentary representatives.